

New Zealand from Above (Episode 5)

Northland

In coproduction with Making Movies (New Zealand), Bearcage (Australia) and ZDF/ARTE

In the north of the Northern Island Maori culture is very present. Here the treaty installing peace between the Maori natives and the European settlers was signed. And according Maori legends the soul departs for its last journey home. The Waipoa Forest is where the oldest Kauri tree is found. It reaches to the east coast of the island with its ragged cliffs is home even to rare Orca whales.

The northern part of the North Island is the most populated part of the country. On the narrow strip of the North Island Maori culture becomes more visible.

The biggest town of the country, Auckland, is located at the narrowest part of the strip. Here the Tasman Sea in the west and the Pacific Ocean in the east are only one kilometre apart. Auckland was built on a volcanic field and even though the volcanoes are considered inactive, the political precautions are evidence for the constant danger occurring from the earth's interior.

Further in the north is the impressive and mystic Waipoua Forest. It consists almost entirely of the majestic Kauri trees, which grow up to 50 meters high and have trunks of at least 4 meters of circumference. In the midst of the forest there is the biggest and oldest Kauri. The „Lord of the Forest“ as the Maori call it is over 2000 years old, 50 meters tall and its trunk has a circumference of roughly 14 meters.

The Poor Knights Islands are located close to the east coast, enchanting their visitors with beautiful and magical marine world! An underwater-photographer shows us the many caves found under the water surface, which offer protection to diverse species of fish.

Further north, in the so-called Bay of Islands region the first Europeans established their settlements. When they arrived a battle broke out between them and the Maori, who had lived there for many centuries already. But in 1840 the treaty of Waitangi was signed by Maori and British: indeed the treatment established a british governor but it also recognised Maori ownership of their land and gave the Maori the rights of British subjects. But even the treaty is considered the founding document of New Zealand, it's still a controversial document. Close to where the treaty was signed the only Maori radiostation – where they talk in their programs the second official language of the country – can be found.

At the northern tip of the North Island, at Kap Reinga, the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean meet. At their meeting point the surface of the ocean is rippled, waves clash against each other.

G E B R U E D E R B E E T Z F I L M P R O D U K T I O N

This is where according to Maori mythology the souls depart earth and start their last journey in direction their ancestor's country, Hawaiiki-A-Nui.